

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0374

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PINT CH

SUBJECT: NEW REVOLUTIONARY OPERAS

1. USLO OFFICERS TOOK ADVANTAGE OF CHIANG CH' ING' S INVITATION TO AMERICAN SWIMMERS AND BASKETBALL PLAYERS TO VIEW TWO LONG- AWAITED NEW REVOLUTIONARY PEKING OPERAS: COMBAT ON THE PLAIN (PING UAN TSO CHAN) AND TU CHUAN MOUNTAIN. BOTH WERE BILLED AS " EXPERIMENTAL PERFORMANCES" BUT OBVIOUSLY CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE WAS ATTACHED TO THEM AND THE PRESENTATIONS WERE COMPLETELY POLISHED. AS REPORTED

PREVIOUSLY, MADAM MAO INSISTED THAT BOTH THE SWIMMERS AND THE BASKETBALL TEAMS ATTEND EVEN THOUGH IT MEANT COMPLETELY REARRANGING

THE SWIMMERS' TRAVEL PLANS. WHEN USLO OFFICERS EXPRESSED INTEREST IN ATTENDING, PERMISSION WAS PROMPTLY GRANTED. THOUGH COMBAT, ATTENDED BY MADAME MAO, YAO WEN- YUAN AND WU TE WAS CLEARLY THE PRESTIGE EVENT, MOUNTAIN A CULTURAL ALLEGORY ABOUT THE LIN PIAO AFFAIR, HAS MUCH MORE POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE.

2. THE DRAMATIS PERSONAE OF MOUNTAIN, SET AT THE TIME OF THE AUTUMN HARVEST UPRISING IN 1928 INCLUDES LEI KANG, AN IMPETUOUS PEASANT MILITARY LEADER; WEN CH' I- CHOU, HIS TREACHEROUS DEPUTY, AND HO HSIANG,

A HEROIC LADY PARTY SECRETARY. THE PLOT REVOLVES AROUND THE CAPTURE

OF LEI KANG BY VILLAINOUS LANDLORDS, HO HSIANG' S RESCUE OF HIM, AND THEIR JOINT COOPERATION IN THWARTING A SELLOUT OF THE PRESENT FORCES TO THE LANDLORDS BY WEN CH' I- HOU. WEN IS SHOT TRYING TO FLEE AFTER HIS PLOT IS EXPOSED AND FALLS TO HIS DEATH OFF A CLIFF.

3. EVERY CHINESE WHO WATCHES MOUNTAIN WILL DRAW THE OBVIOUS PARALLEL

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PAGE 02 PEKING 00374 220332 Z

BETWEEN LIN PIAO AND THE TRAITOROUS WEN. THEY WILL ALSO GET STRONG
" THE PARTY CONTROLS THE GUN" THEME WHICH PERMEATES THE PLAY AND
WHICH

THE REGIME IS SO ANXIOUS TO PUSH AS THE PARTY WORKS TO REESTABLISH
ITS CONTROL. THEY WILL BE LESS CLEAR ON OTHER PARALLELS; WHO, FOR
INSTANCE, IS THE IMPETUOUS LEADER\$ AND WHO THE HEROIC LADY PARTY
SECRETARY? THESE QUESTIONS SHOULD SPUR ENTERTAINING SPECULATION
AMONG
CHINESE AUDIENCES.

4. AS FAR AS COMBAT ON THE PLAINS IS CONCERNED, VIEWERS WILL
PROBABLY

JUST YAWN. IT IS STANDARD POTBOILER ABOUT THE ANTI- JAPANESE WAR
WITH THE USUAL STEREOTYPES: THE HERO FROM THE EIGHTH ROUTE ARMY,
HIS
HEAVYWEIGHT OPPONENT FROM THE JAPANESE IMPERIAL ARMY; A LANDLORD
HENCHMAN; A SELF- SACRIFICING PEASANT GRANDMOTHER WHO LOVES THE
ARMY,
ETC., ETC. THE LIGHTING, SPECIAL EFFECTS, AND ACROBATICS ARE
EXCELLENT, BUT THE REST IS OLD, OLD STUFF.
BRUCE

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